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The number of unemployed and pensioners is on the increase and the price of social security is rising. See page 3.

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#### IN THIS ISSUE

- ++ The price of social welfare (p. 3)
- ++ Energy : the rebirth of coal (p. 3)
- ++ Parliament : budget, unemployment and consumers (p. 3)
- ++ More unemployed women and young people than men (p. 3)
- ++ Food control (p. 4)
- ++ Social Fund aid for vocational retraining (p. 4)
- ++ Energy saving report (p. 5)
- ++ Migrant workers social security rights (p. 5)
- ++ Local authorities and Europe (p. 5)
- ++ Improving oil supply (p. 6)
- ++ All you wanted to know about social policy but never dared to ask (p. 6)

**++ THE PRICE OF SOCIAL WELFARE**

The cost of social security could rise to one quarter of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the Community by 1980. Health treatment costs are rising, people are living longer, pension costs are going up and unemployment is on the increase - all of which is expanding the European Social Budget.

Annex 1 discusses the European Social Budget drawn up by the European Commission.

**++ ENERGY : THE REBIRTH OF COAL**

Community oil imports are decreasing but economic stagnation is as much the cause as energy savings efforts.

Further efforts must be made by the Community to guarantee energy supply in the future. Annex 2 outlines a special role for coal.

**++ PARLIAMENT : BUDGET, UNEMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMERS**

The Community budget for 1979 was the focal point of discussion at the latest session of the European Parliament, and their verdict is that it is too small to produce the economic boost decided upon at the summits in Bonn and Bremen.

Annex 3 presents some of the issues raised in the discussions as well as other highlights of the session.

**++ MORE UNEMPLOYED WOMEN AND YOUNG PEOPLE THAN MEN**

Unemployed people registered with Employment Exchanges in the Community numbered nearly six million at the end of August - 5.6% of the working population in Europe. Looked at in the light of seasonal variations, these figures show that the increase of unemployed in the Community has slowed down a little.

The unemployment rate in France, the Netherlands, Denmark and Luxembourg rests between 5% and 6%. It has come back down to 3.3% in Belgium and 1.4% in the UK. The increase in jobless in Germany and Ireland is low. Italy shows a slight decline.

The increase in the rate of unemployed women is more rapid than that of men. Women out of work represent 6.7% of the female working population and 44% of total unemployed. Women represent more than half the total unemployed in Germany, France and Belgium.

The number of unemployed young people under the age of 25 continues to grow and accounts for 40.5% of the total unemployed in France, 43.8% in Belgium, 48.7% in the Netherlands and 60% in Luxembourg.

**++ FOOD CONTROL**

The weight of the contents of shopping bags in the Nine totals about 200,000 tonnes a day. That's what Community citizens need to eat to keep themselves going. This gives an idea of the task facing those responsible for vetting the quality of our food. Two hundred participants at a colloquium organised in Rome by the European Commission on the theme of food control agreed on the need for harmonising sampling procedures in the Nine and organising information exchanges between inspectors and the people involved : manufacturers, shop keepers, consumers etc.

National administrations, together with the services of the European Commission, wish to make the warning system applied when foodstuffs coming from abroad are rejected by one European country more effective - as was the case with high mercury content tuna fish recently imported into Europe.

**++ SOCIAL FUND AID FOR VOCATIONAL RETRAINING**

The European Commission has decided to allocate 620 650 European units of account (1EUA = + 1.3 dollars) to nine pilot projects dealing with vocational training and re-training:

- experimental programme to train women in weaving in Belgium;
- programme for training instructors for the Belgian textile sector;
- development of techniques for training workers in the British meat industry;
- study for retraining dockers in Martinique;
- training workers to use the laser as an industrial tool in Belgium;
- training instructors of teaching activities in Italy;
- promoting the creation of new industries in the United Kingdom;
- developing training programmes for instructors and workers in the cotton and textile sectors in the U.K.

The money provided will come from the European Social Fund whose 1978 budget amounts to a total of 570 million EUA. These funds are used to reimburse 50% of the cost of vocational retraining projects financed by national authorities, or in the case of private projects, to offer subsidies matching those provided by public authorities.

**++ ENERGY SAVING REPORT**

The Community programme for the rational use of energy aims to achieve the following targets by 1985:

- domestic and tertiary sector : -18%
- industrial sector : -15%
- domestic consumption savings : -15%
- transport : -16%
- energy industry : - 6% (estimate)

The European Commission has just published its second report on the Rational Use of Energy programme, containing Commission reports to the Council of Ministers, measures adopted by national governments and reports from experts on building insulation, and transport vehicles etc. The report is available from Community bookshops (listed on back page) priced £2.40.

**++ MIGRANT WORKERS SOCIAL SECURITY RIGHTS**

Since 1971 wage-earning migrant workers and their families have had the right to social security in Community countries, but this is not yet the case for self-employed workers. At the end of 1977 the Commission sent a further request to the Council of Ministers to end this anomaly. Following further requests from the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee, the Commission has sent yet another request to the Nine's Ministers for Social Affairs. The intention is to extend the application of social security systems in the Nine to all insured migrants (non-working as well).

**++ LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND EUROPE**

On the initiative of the European Commission, local authorities in the nine Community countries (elected in boroughs, cities, counties, etc.) have decided to establish permanent contacts with a view to exchanging information and experience and thereby improve the quality of public services.

There are numerous fields where the transfer of such information could lead to the application of more effective techniques : management systems, refuse removal systems, pollution control, vehicle design, (ambulances, public transport, etc.) building regulations etc.

To set up such an information exchange, representatives for the Nine's local authorities meeting at Luxembourg decided to set up a regular conference on technology for European local authorities. Delegates would meet once every year and each country would have seven representatives. The Commission would participate on a consultative basis.

**++ IMPROVING OIL SUPPLY**

To improve the security of the Community's oil supply, the European Commission has proposed to provide financial support to 47 technology projects in the hydrocarbon field (exploration, exploitation, storage, transport). The projects aim to:

- improve prospecting techniques
- increase the yield from oil and gas fields
- perfect techniques for deep sea fields

Aid proposed by the Commission amounts to 39 million EUA (1 EUA = + 1.3 dollars). Between 1974 and 1977 similar projects have benefited to the tune of 128 million EUA from Community funds.

**++ ALL YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SOCIAL POLICY BUT NEVER DARED TO ASK**

What's the use of the European Social Fund? What's in it for the unemployed? What has the Community done so far to help protect the health and safety of workers and to limit the number of accidents at work?

The answers to these questions can be found in a booklet called "The European Community's Social Policy" published by the European Commission's information service. For instance, did you know that 100 000 people die each year as a result of accidents at work?

The booklet can be bought for 25p from the Community's publication sales offices listed on the back page of Euroforum.

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## THE PRICE OF SOCIAL WELFARE

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At a time when the economic crisis is hitting the working population particularly hard, collective mutual help - social security - is particularly precious albeit expensive. European Commission experts have calculated that between 1975 and 1980 social expenditure will absorb close on a quarter of gross domestic product. By 1980 total expenditure financed by the European Social Budget will amount to some 476 000 million units of account - close to 500 billion dollars.

Much of the high standard of living enjoyed in the European Community is due to the impressive effort Europe makes in the social field : health care, pensions, unemployment benefit, family allowances, disability payments etc. All European countries have developed social security systems to ensure assistance in hard times.

### Effects of the crisis

Governments decided many years ago to raise social expenditure but its real impact is being eroded by the economic crisis. Whilst social expenditure rose on average 6.7% per annum in the Community between 1970 and 1975, the corresponding rise between 1975 and 1980 will only amount to 3.2% in real terms.

This slowdown is one of the findings of the second report on the European Social Budget drawn up for the Council of Ministers by the European Commission.

The impact of the economic crisis on social expenditure tends to vary greatly from country to country and whilst the United Kingdom and Ireland will only suffer slight reductions, Denmark and Germany will experience a significant drop in the share of GDP given over to social expenditure. France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands by contrast will show a slight rise in 1980 relative to 1975 levels. Belgium should increase its percentage slightly as will Italy if its national health service is set up by 1980.

### European Social Budget for what?

But why produce a two volume report more than 300 pages long containing facts and figures dealing with the Social Budget? Basically because it is a unique source of quantitative information on social expenditure over the medium term in various sectors of social policy and on financing methods. These figures are consequently of great interest to national administrators, politicians, employers and trade unionists. During coming years the European Social Budget will also

become a precious instrument for decision-makers at the national as well as Community level. It should provide suitable information on which to base national policies in a number of fields : social provisions, public finance, the economy, employment, etc.

At the Community level it will be useful to compare forecasts and assist national administrations in exchanging information and experience, and also in researching solutions and common approaches to problems. In 1974, Ministers for social affairs in the Nine decided to strengthen coordination of social policies to give more impetus to the Community's social action programme (see Euroforum N° 24/76).

But the European Social Budget is not a crystal ball and cannot predict with any precision what will happen between now and 1980. Yet it can indicate general orientations and perhaps what modifications may be required.

#### Comparison is not enough

The social security systems in each Community country can in fact be compared, but such a concept would be absurd.

For statistics are generally not comparable : they have to be considered, for example, in relation to capital expenditures which vary from country to country.

It is consequently not possible to say which country has the best or worst system. One country for example could spend more on unemployment - not because the jobless are better treated but because there are more of them. There again is the health field, high expenditure could be more the result of high doctors' fees rather than high quality treatment, and with regard to family allowances it is important to consider the supplementary tax benefits offered in some countries which are also an important source of family assistance.

#### Solidarity

Social security benefits are generally given in two forms : cash and kind. When a person is ill the money he receives is more often to compensate his loss of wages than to provide medical care.

As regards unemployment however the aid given is not so much direct aid, i.e. a job, but money as compensation.



Health expenditure takes an increasingly large slice of the European Social Budget and covers illness, disablement/infirmity, industrial accidents and occupational illnesses. The total has risen from 42 billion units of account (1 u.a. = + 1.2 US dollars) in 1970 to 100 billion in 1975 and should accelerate to 187 billion by the 1980s i.e. four tenths of the European Social Budget will be absorbed by health expenditures.

Of this total, direct help will absorb 62% of health expenditure in 1980 given the rising cost of health care. Between 1970 and 1975 very divergent rates have been observed in some countries between the general rise in the cost of living and medical costs.

#### Pension rights

Money given for pensions etc. or to dependents in the event of death makes up a large percentage of the European Social Budget (40%) and will rise from 47 billion units of account in 1970 to 102 billion in 1975 and more than 187 billion in 1980.

Out of this, financial assistance is much greater than direct expenditure or help in kind (if health expenditure for aged people is excluded). Direct expenditures in Denmark however are substantial and will rise to about 30% towards 1980. This is primarily because of the high cost of homes for old people - these are not geriatric hospitals in the strict sense.

Financial aid given during old age, for death and to dependents is substantial, particularly considering that the number of persons over 65 has increased by more than 11% between 1970 and 1975 and that this group now represents 13.3% of the total population.

In addition, many people are retiring early in some countries with the result that the number of people reaching "normal" retiring age has increased less rapidly (7.2% instead of the 11% mentioned above). Between 1975 and 1980 the rate of increase of this group will be around 1.4% as against 5.9% for the group aged 65 and over. Consequently the increase in allocations will be more influenced by the need to follow (or precede) inflation rather than a large increase in the number of old people.

#### Unemployment

In 1970 unemployment benefits only represented 2.1% of the European Social Budget (2.3 billion units of account). In 1975 the share of unemployment benefit in the Budget doubled

(4.3% of the budget) and the volume of the sums involved increased five times (by more than 11 billion units of account). By 1980, 18 billion units of account will be allocated in unemployment benefit throughout the Community.

A comparison of unemployment benefit per person in relation to economic resources shows relatively high figures for Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands;

Unemployment benefit for registered unemployed as a percentage of the gross domestic product of the working population:

<u>Country</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1980</u>
Belgium	32.9	40.7
Denmark	53.9 (1)	37.6
Germany	21.2	13.7
France	14.9	22.0
Ireland	16.3	14.0
Italy	10.9	19.2
Luxembourg	26.8	not available
Netherlands	40.1	44.2
United Kingdom	29.0	17.7
Community	19.9	19.5

(1) Including travel expenses

Who pays?

How is such enormous expenditure financed? The system varies from country to country and some countries place more importance on contributions and others on income tax. For the whole Community the revenue in 1980 should, according to forecasts, be made up of two thirds contributions and a quarter fiscal income. Capital revenue and other incomes should amount to less than 5%.

In 1980 industry will contribute more than 38.5% of this income and households 21.6% on average. Administrations (i.e. tax authorities) will provide 36.7% and the balance will be made up from a variety of resources such as income from capital.

This is the price of social security but can a price be put on its value?

## ENERGY : THE REBIRTH OF COAL

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Community oil imports over the last six months have dropped 4% compared to the same period in 1977. Energy imports in general (oil and others) have decreased 2.2%.

These figures should not lead us to be excessively optimistic however since they are as much the product of economic stagnation as the increase in energy production and the more rational use of energy in the Community.

In the long term - towards the end of the 1980s and beyond - we can expect that growing pressure will be put on world oil supplies and real prices will rise. This could mean increased difficulties for the Community which already pays 50 billion dollars per year (or 20% of its foreign trade) on energy imports.

Given these factors and given the absence of supply problems, the cost of energy imports could in fact be an obstacle preventing the Community from realising its social and economic objectives.

This is the reason why the European Council reaffirmed on July 6 and 7 the Community's basic objective of limiting this risk by reducing Community energy dependence to 50%.

This presupposes Community action in a number of fields which the Commission has recalled in a report to the Nine:

- Hydrocarbons : all necessary measures have to be taken to achieve oil production targets in 1985 of 140 million tonnes, and gas targets of 160 million tonnes of oil equivalent or toe. These figures are based on current forecasts. Since the Community's total oil requirements in 1985 will be approximately 635 million tonnes, it should be possible to limit oil imports to 500 million tonnes this year.
- Nuclear energy has not expanded as rapidly as expected. Current forecasts which anticipate a doubling of nuclear capacity by 1990 are viewed with considerable scepticism. The European Commission thinks that constant expansion of nuclear capacity is required but this should take into account popular consent and concern for the protection of the environment.
- The development of renewable energy sources (solar, wind, wave power, etc.) should be given maximum encouragement by the Community.

- Energy savings : measures already taken by the Nine represent considerable progress but there is still plenty to do. The Community and the Nine should encourage investments in the energy savings field which are no less profitable than investments which will ultimately produce energy.

#### Supply security guarantees

As the Community's energy supply situation is still a source of concern, the European Commission has stressed the role which coal can play over the coming decade. The Community has large coal resources and these are the best guarantee for long term supply security and the protection of the consumer against abrupt price increases caused by factors outside the control of the Nine. The use of coal in the Community is still insufficient mostly due to the high cost of Community coal and the lack of investment in coal fired power stations. With this in mind, the Commission has made proposals to the Council of Ministers to:

- offer a subsidy of 10 European units of account (1 EUA = approx. 1.3 dollars) per tonne of Community coal. This will only partially reduce the gap between the price of Community coal (average 65 dollars per tonne) and the price of imported coal (average 30 dollars per tonne). The difference will be made up by producers and national aids;
- encourage by way of Community aid the construction or conversion of thermal power stations to coal instead of oil.

A number of encouraging measures have already been taken:

- Since 1967 the Community has been operating a system for coking coal permitting aids of 31 million EUA for intra-Community trade;
- the Council of Ministers had adopted a regulation on financial aid to the development of new techniques in the gasification and liquefaction of coal.

The net effect of these systems should be to prevent the production and use of coal from declining in the Community (the Community only produced 218 million tonnes in 1977 as against 250 million tonnes in 1973). This is the *sin qua non* for enabling coal to make an important contribution in the near future.

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PARLIAMENT : BUDGET, UNEMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMERS

The Community budget for 1979 was the focal point of discussion - and disagreement - at the first session of the European Parliament after the summer recess. The majority of speakers actively deplored the way the Council had trimmed the draft proposal proposed by the Commission which only asked for relatively moderate increases - too modest in the opinion of certain parliamentarians.

Modest budget

In its defence a representative from the Council of Ministers stressed the 24% increases in social expenditure and the 26% for developing countries in next year's budget, but, according to Mr. Bangemann, speaking for the Liberal Group, structural expenditure has been reduced by 10%. On behalf of the Communist and Allied Group, Mr. Alterio Spinelli, a former member of the European Commission, stressed that it would be a mistake to cut Community budgets and increase national expenditure in consequence whilst the tasks involved - such as the reduction of economic differences - could be more effectively accomplished at the Community level.

These criticisms are not new : each year the European Parliament deplores the small size of the budget, but this time the proximity of the European Council at Bremen to the European economic summit in Bonn gave Parliamentarians an additional argument : the economic boost decided at the highest level cannot be accomplished, in their opinion, without the appropriate budget.

Moreover, European Parliamentarians of all dispositions welcomed the new boost given to the Community by the Bonn and Bremen meetings. Mr. Alesquer echoed the views of many Parliamentarians by stressing that without economic and monetary union, there will be no united Europe.

Growth does not equal employment

Are these summit meetings in touch with the realities of the current situation, unemployment for example? Many doubts were raised in the discussion by the Socialist Pisani, who was astonished that Europe's leaders at Bremen were mostly preoccupied about economic and monetary matters. Mr. Pisani tried to demystify the theory which holds that economic growth itself is a guarantee of full employment. Growth increases imports of raw materials and consequently tends to unsettle the balance of payments, favouring inflation which in turn generates unemployment. We can no longer have faith

in economic growth as if it could resolve all problems, Mr. Pisani concluded. The long discussion which followed demonstrated that unemployment is a major preoccupation of European Parliamentarians.

Wine and stew

The European Parliament discussed two problems of particular interest to consumers:

- The mutton market : either as lamb cutlets or stewed mutton, sheep meat is very popular in the U.K. and prices are consequently almost half those in France. Worried about an invasion of cheap meat, France is reluctant to open its frontiers - a fact which is contrary to the free movement of goods and may soon be brought up before the European Court of Justice.
- Wine and alcohol tax : each country has its own traditions in the field of alcoholic beverages : encouraging national drinks and penalising competitive imports through taxation. These practices are completely contrary to Common Market rules, but nevertheless they continue : the level of excise duty on a hectolitre of wine varies, for example, from 1.64 European units of account in France (1 EUA = + 1.3 dollars) to 109.14 EUA in the United Kingdom. The Commission representative described to the Parliamentarians the situation which had brought four countries - France, Italy, Denmark and the United Kingdom - before the European Court of Justice to end discrimination against alcohol from neighbouring countries.

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